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## Leadership Challenges for the University of the 21st Century

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# Leadership Challenges for the University of the 21st Century

## **Abstract**

Though its goal to provide quality, affordable education has not changed, the “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” has entered a period of transition. With the pressure to uphold its standards while maintaining cultural relevancy, the academy finds itself in the midst of a challenging time made even more difficult by its precarious financial situation. However, education in leadership must recognize that this transitional period is also one of opportunity. The University of Louisville has developed a strategy for addressing modern that endeavors to benefit students and educators alike as it unites them.

## **Keywords**

challenges, leadership, University of Louisville, opportunity, strategy

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# Leadership Challenges for the University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**James R. Ramsey** *President, University of Louisville*

**Madison Wesley** *Office of the President\**

## Abstract

*Though its goal to provide quality, affordable education has not changed, the “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” has entered a period of transition. With the pressure to uphold its standards while maintaining cultural relevancy, the academy finds itself in the midst of a challenging time made even more difficult by its precarious financial situation. However, education in leadership must recognize that this transitional period is also one of opportunity. The University of Louisville has developed a strategy for addressing modern challenges that endeavors to benefit students and educators alike as it unites them.*

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## Introduction

“A rich program on a restricted purse! Such might be the despairing slogan of the hard beset university president for unprecedented problems today confront the universities and colleges of America. But there also faces them unprecedented opportunity.”

University of California President Robert Sproul spoke the above words in 1934 during the worst economic downturn in our nation’s history — a time when few would have faulted him for feeling overwhelmed by the multiplicity of obstacles confronting the modern American university. Yet, President Sproul was a forward thinker who believed in the resiliency of higher education, not just in California but also across the nation, and he saw his circumstances through the sharp eyes of a leader, recognizing that challenges often arise hand-in-hand with opportunities.

And so it is today. The academy again faces unprecedented challenges — challenges beyond financial and budgetary — that threaten higher education as we know it, but we think of the words of President Sproul and of the higher education system that developed in California over time. We understand that difficulties can yet again provide opportunities for the academy. The challenges of today have created a unique occasion that we as leaders, educators, and administrators should take advantage of rather than lament, as it provides higher education institutions the invaluable opportunity to identify strategies and tactics that ensure that we become “Universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

*\*Madison Wesley was Dr. Ramsey's research assistant.*

## Challenges Facing the Academy Today

### Financial Issues

Higher education has been, and continues to be, challenged by the economic environment of the last 8 to 10 years. While President Sproul and his cohorts faced the reality of the “Great Depression,” the academy is currently feeling the lingering impacts of the worst economic downturn since that time.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1 illustrates gross domestic product (GDP) growth over the last decade. The ups and downs of the business cycle result in periodic budget cuts for public institutions and depreciation of the value of endowments for both public and private scholars. The current economic recovery is somewhat unique, in that the “recovery phase” of this business cycle has been slow and gradual.

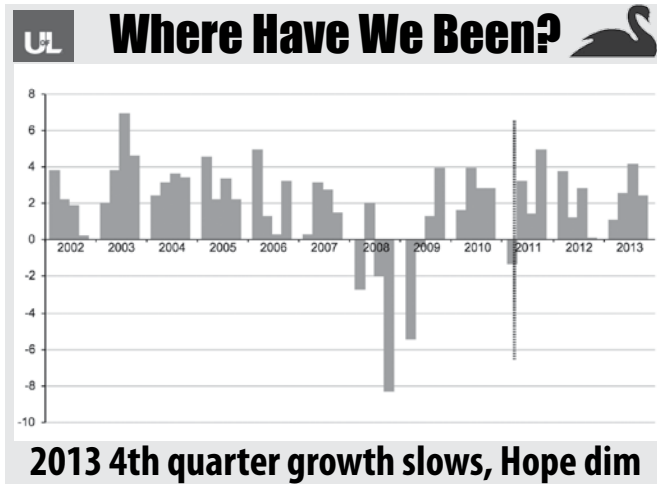
As shown in Figure 1, the national economy began recovery in 2010, but the following years have been characterized by a series of events often described as “Black Swans” or “Swans” — improbable events that have hindered a robust national or international recovery.<sup>2</sup> For example, in 2011 the tsunami and nuclear meltdown impacted the Japanese economy; civil unrest around the world brought economic instability; and the implosion of

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the recent recession, 7,479 million jobs have been lost in America since December 2007. Though numerous jobs were gained in the recovery, still 1.1 million fewer people are working today as of December 2013. This information was compiled from the following sources: <http://beta.bls.gov> and <http://www.deptofnumbers.com>.

<sup>2</sup> More information regarding the “Black Swan” can be found in finance professor and Wall Street trader Nassim Nicholas Taleb’s book *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (2010).

many European markets impacted U.S. recovery. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy and “sequestration” impacted economic growth. In 2013, the after-effects of “sequestration” and the subsequent government shutdown further hindered a more rapid national recovery.



<http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=9&step=1#reqid=9&step=3&isuri=1&903=1>

**Figure 1.** Overview of National Economy Gross Domestic Product 2002-2013

As noted, even at the end of 2013, 1.1 million fewer people were working in the United States than at the beginning of the recession, and this slow economic recovery has had domino effects across markets. Declines and then slow growth in employment rates have impacted state income and sales tax collections that underpin budgets, resulting in higher education cuts and modest, at best, increases during the recovery. The underlying collapse of the credit markets during the recession also has resulted in significant depreciation of many asset classes, impacting endowment returns for both public and private universities.

The impact of this slow recovery on higher education is captured by Moody's Investors Service's (2013) recent comments:

The outlook for the U.S. higher education sector remains negative. Business conditions in the sector will remain stressed over the next 12-18 months. Revenue growth is expected to remain much lower than historical standards and to be eclipsed by expenses due to pent up institutional demand.

Macroeconomic pressures including a relatively high unemployment rate, lagging labor force participation rate, and income stagnation are undercutting the ability of universities to grow net tuition revenue. (para. 1 & 3)

Standard & Poor's (2013) also has recently added that higher education continues to face budget pressures and lackluster investments — setbacks that need to be addressed in light of increasingly fierce competition for students. According to their recent publication, many schools have been faced with the seemingly impossible task of balancing a shrinking revenue base with growing expenses, and the resolution of some has been to increase international recruitment among financially sound families in an effort to stabilize financial aid budgets (Standard & Poor's, 2013).

### Market Pressures

While budget cuts have become commonplace for both public and private institutions in recent years (Scogin & Adkins, 2014), the “marketplace” for higher education also has changed dramatically during this time. Changes in both supply and demand have required a competitive response from education institutions, a trend that will not slow anytime soon.

Perhaps the most prominent example is the continually changing demographics of the “consumers” of higher education — the students — who require “producers” to accommodate the shifting market demands. The primary historical competition among higher education institutions has been for the traditional 18-20 year old high school graduate, but today our consumers include:

- Adults returning to finish their baccalaureate degrees or to obtain more education for job competitiveness;
- Returning veterans;
- Transfer students; and
- An ever-increasing demographic mix driven by population changes.<sup>3</sup>

The supply side of the higher education market also is changing. The numbers for proprietary institutions exploded after 1992 in the United States, with the introduction of the federal regulation known as the 90/10 rule<sup>4</sup> (The Institute for College Access and Success, 2012). The enrollment in the country's nearly 3,000 proprietary colleges grew by an average of 9% per year over the last 30 years, compared with a 1.5% per year growth for

<sup>3</sup> For more information regarding the changing university environment, you may view the Moody's Investors Service 2014 Outlook report at [http://facilities.georgetown.edu/document/1242807545994/11-25-2013\\_Higher+Education+Not+for+Profit+Outlook+2014.pdf](http://facilities.georgetown.edu/document/1242807545994/11-25-2013_Higher+Education+Not+for+Profit+Outlook+2014.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Implemented in 1992, the 90/10 rule is a federal law barring for-profit colleges from receiving more than 90% of their revenues from Department of Education federal student aid. It prevents for-profit colleges from being funded solely by federal taxpayers and encourages the notion that, if a college offers a quality education at a competitive price, someone other than the federal government will be willing to pay for it.

public and not-for-profit institutions. Today, for-profit universities educate about 7% of the nation's roughly 19 million students, compared to the mere 100,000 they educated just 30 years ago (Wilson, 2010). This sudden increase in the presence of proprietary institutions has provided consumers with educational opportunities at any time and any place, and it has allowed producers to quickly and specifically meet changing workplace demands.

As a corollary, it also is important to recognize that educational delivery models have dramatically changed from the era when all that a freshly minted Ph.D. needed to be successful in the classroom was "a piece of chalk and a chalkboard." New technology platforms and alternative educational delivery models are becoming increasingly relevant in today's classrooms and often are demanded by consumers of higher education. One current debate within the academy, for example, is the role of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as an efficient method of, not only meeting demand, but also of containing cost.<sup>5</sup> In addition to providing a virtually unlimited number of students with access to an online education, MOOCs alleviate the financial pressure of the university by offering alternatives to full-time, on-location professors.

Modern colleges and universities, as well as their accreditors and honor societies, have had to respond to these changing demands of students seeking alternative educational delivery models. This has, in some instances, led to the implementation of new educational business models, such as in the case of Southern New Hampshire University, a higher education institution that has gained prominence by developing an alternative educational delivery model to generate revenue that supports its traditional delivery model (Kahn, 2014). In just five years, SNHU has exploded from a struggling 2,000-student private school to an online educational powerhouse with 34,000 students enrolled. The university President's emphasis on "customer service" has been credited with propelling the small university into national fame, supporting the argument that providing students with what they are seeking can yield tremendous results (Kahn, 2014).

### **A New Public Policy Environment**

The academy is currently facing a public policy dilemma: institutions are feeling the pressure of ever-increasing

expectations at the very time that their dwindling budgets are experiencing cuts.

Human capital theory has long established the relationship between educational attainment and the earning capacity of individuals (Becker, 1992). The "historical economic development" role of higher education has been that an increase in human capital (number of baccalaureate, professional, and doctoral degrees) would not only benefit the consumer but also would result in positive externalities, thus enhancing societal benefits.<sup>6</sup> More recently, the "economic development" expectations placed upon the academy have included:

1. Producing specific job skills required in the short term in the work place; and
2. Providing research and educational/training opportunities as part of recruitment incentives for businesses and industries in specific geographic areas.

Other policy expectations of the academy today include a broader focus on community engagement and development, including the distribution of health care and social services to underserved populations — again, most often without allocated resources.

Policymakers often further expect universities to be accessible and affordable, while expanding their reach to specific segments of the education market, such as those noted above (i.e., transfer students, returning veterans, student completer degrees, etc.).

### **Integrity**

A fourth challenge facing the academy today is the integrity issue of higher education as an entity. Numerous incidents, from high-profile campus criminal activities to NCAA violations on the part of institutions, have shaken confidence in higher education governance and leadership. In addition, instances of universities falsifying data to the *U.S. News & World Report* with the goal of enhancing national rankings raise questions regarding the academy's values (Marcus, 2013). In the face of increased pressure for transparency about average student debt and job placement rates, six major colleges and universities have been caught misrepresenting their numbers to prospective students, compromising the integrity of the higher education system as a whole (Marcus, 2013). Additionally, over 100 colleges recently

<sup>5</sup> A Massive Open Online Course provides unlimited classroom access via the Internet to essentially an unlimited number of people. While many applaud MOOCs for their accessibility and their potential to boost the credit ratings of larger universities, others criticize their impersonal nature and unimpressive completion rate.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on the role of externalities as a factor for public sector policies to improve market outcomes, see "The Theory of the Public Sector Budget: An Economic Perspective," Merl Hackbart and James R. Ramsey, published in *Budget, Theory in the Public Sector*, edited by Aman Khan and VV. Bartley Hildreth (2002).

have been accused of falsifying federal student financial aid documents in order to bar students from accessing their available funding (Field, 2014). Though these instances by no means implicate the entire American higher education system, public perception often is that the academy is over-commercialized and willing to sacrifice integrity for new revenue sources.

Obviously, the academy as an industry is diverse: large vs. small institutions; public vs. private institutions; research institutions vs. community colleges; etc. Even so, with few exceptions, in recent years institutions of higher education have faced one or more of the above challenges. The reality of these obstacles requires educators to develop plans for responding to this changing and challenging environment, while effectively maintaining the institution's mission.

## Case Study – University of Louisville

The University of Louisville was founded in 1798, when eight community leaders stated that, for Louisville as a community to be a place of “some consequence,” it needed an institution of higher education. Those individuals became the benefactors that created the Jefferson Seminary, the precursor to the University of Louisville. Throughout most of its history, the University of Louisville was a semi-private/municipal institution.

In 1970, for primarily financial reasons, the University of Louisville became part of the Kentucky higher education system. Upon becoming a state institution, the University of Louisville was “another mouth to feed” in the Kentucky higher education system — an expensive mouth at that, since the University of Louisville had high-cost programs including medicine, dentistry, law, and engineering. The University of Louisville also boasted a select number of Ph.D. programs — programs that already existed at the state's land grant flagship institution, the University of Kentucky.

It was not until the Kentucky General Assembly enacted the Postsecondary Education Reform Act of 1997 (the “Reform”) that the University of Louisville received a defined statutory mandate to become a “premier nationally recognized metropolitan research university.” Policymakers understood that long-term economic viability of the state was linked to the well being of the state's major urban area and that a major research university was critical to the economic success of Louisville and, thus, the state.

With the passage of the “Reform,” the University of Louisville adopted a strategic plan, the *Challenge*

for Excellence, 1998-2008. This plan was based upon the statutory mandate given to the university; it also identified 14 goals and defined strategies and tactics for achieving this mandate. (The strategic plan, however, was not accompanied by a business plan that identified the cost of achieving each of the goals.) The passage of the “Reform” and the accompanying financial resources allotted to institutions was a “golden age” for higher education in Kentucky, made up of strong policy and financial support. The University of Louisville, with the help of this mandate and state support, began to rapidly accomplish its goals and achieve important public policy objectives (e.g., improved graduation rates, increase in federal research, etc.).

Members attending the University of Louisville Board of Trustees summer retreat in 2006 determined that the university was making significant advancements toward achieving the *Challenge for Excellence*; and, thus, it was time to begin planning the university's next strategic agenda. Under the direction of the Provost, campus discussions that took place from 2006-2008 resulted in the Board's adoption of the *2020 Plan*<sup>7</sup> at its summer retreat in 2008. The statutory mandate from the Commonwealth of Kentucky continued to be the University of Louisville's strategic vision/mission. The 14 goals previously discussed were consolidated into five broad areas of focus within the *2020 Plan*; and for each area of focus, the plan identified strategies, tactics, and metrics of performance through the year 2020. Alongside the adoption of the *2020 Plan*, the University of Louisville also implemented a business plan that identified the resources required to instate new research faculty, teaching faculty, etc., in order to achieve the goals outlined for the long term. Coincidentally, the adoption of the *2020 Plan* occurred at the beginning of the downturn in the national economy; and, at the time, no one could predict the depth and duration of the recession or the slowness of the recovery that was to follow.

Despite ensuing state budget cuts, the university continued to meet most of its annual metrics from 2008-2012. However, at the Board's 2012 summer retreat, members held a discussion to address whether the *2020 Plan* was still relevant. Concern was mounting that significant change — including a series of state budget cuts, numerous marketplace changes, changing public expectations of the academy, and the perceived erosion

<sup>7</sup> The five areas of focus identified in the *2020 Plan* are: Educational Excellence; Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity; Community Engagement; Diversity, Opportunity, and Social Justice; and Creative and Responsible Stewardship. More information regarding the *2020 Plan* and these focus areas can be found at [http://louisville.edu/provost/resources/UofL\\_Scorecard\\_2011.pdf](http://louisville.edu/provost/resources/UofL_Scorecard_2011.pdf).

of the integrity of the academy — rendered the *2020 Plan* unachievable, and perhaps no longer even relevant.

It should be noted that, as a result of a series of state budget cuts resulting first from the recession of 2001, the university had developed a strategy that included motions to: (1) manage costs and expenses, (2) generate new income from existing and alternative sources, and (3) ensure that all assets of the university were fully performing. The University of Louisville found success in each of these strategic aspects, which was an encouraging development in the midst of challenging circumstances. This success was exhibited over a series of years when, for example, the university implemented cost production and avoidance programs that saved \$114 million in spending. Additionally, the University of Louisville identified new revenue sources that helped offset state budget cuts. (As with other universities, these “new” revenues supplemented significant tuition increases.) These successes helped propel the university along its trajectory toward achieving its annual metrics, but in 2012 the Board expressed concerns regarding whether the university could maintain this progress to achieve the metrics identified for the year 2020.

The Board’s discussion was divided along two primary thoughts; on one hand, a number of Board members felt that the “world” of academia had changed so dramatically that the *2020 Plan*, while still relevant in terms of its strategic initiatives, was non-achievable from a practical perspective. A second faction of the Board, however, believed that, not only were the *2020 Plan*’s strategic initiatives still relevant, but any impression that the university was “backing off” of the plan would send the wrong message to the campus community. After some debate, the Board emerged from the retreat with an idea for campus conversation that was dedicated to exploring the following topic: “What would the University of Louisville as a ‘University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ look like and what would it take to achieve that model?” These discussions were not intended to result in a new strategic plan but rather to focus on a realistic assessment of the current business plan; this allowed members to consider what tactical changes should be made in order to continue moving forward with the *2020 Plan* in a much changed environment, specifically where finances, markets, and policies were concerned.

The following Provost-led discussion focused on the following identifiable areas:

1. The identification of key multidisciplinary collaborative areas of study of teaching, research, and community, in which the

university would be recognized as excellent. These multidisciplinary collaborative areas would be closely linked to economic and social needs of the community and state.

2. The identification of what was required to be a “student-centered” university. It should be noted that talk of a “student-centered” university focused on the demands of the consumer and was perceived by some faculty and staff to minimize the critical role of shared governance. As a result, this conversation evolved into a dialogue of a “student-centered” university being less important than a discussion of the demands/expectations of different consumers of higher education.
3. A reassessment of the university’s business processes, recognizing that despite the university’s previous cost management and revenue and asset maximizing efforts, the university must continue to re-engineer itself to be successful.
4. A refocus of the university’s “culture,” with an attempt to reaffirm a commitment to its statutory mandate of excellence.

## Progress To Date

The campus discussions around the “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” began with a strength/weakness/opportunity/threat (SWOT) analysis performed for the campus by an outside consultant. The results of the SWOT analysis were presented to the campus community both in open campus forums and as online summaries.

Upon the conclusion of the SWOT analysis, the Provost created four committees to study the areas previously identified and to discuss how to address each issue. These committees provided recommendations to a steering committee for presentation to the Board of Trustees at their 2013 retreat. These recommendations were endorsed by the Board, with the direction to continue campus discussions during the Fall semester focusing on specific actions and implementation plans.

At the February 2014 meeting of the Board, the Provost presented 10 specific action steps to be implemented. Each step has its own separate timetable for achievement, and the most recent progress report was presented by the Board of Trustees at their summer 2014 retreat.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For more information regarding the Board’s most recent discussion, see [http://louisville.edu/president/presentations-speeches/BOT-Workshop.pptx/at\\_download/file](http://louisville.edu/president/presentations-speeches/BOT-Workshop.pptx/at_download/file).

## Lessons Learned

While campus implementation of recommendations continues today, the University of Louisville has benefited from this process and this self-assessment in meaningful ways. Several valuable lessons learned follow.

**1. Managing Change.** Change, obviously, is difficult — not only its implementation, but also the acceptance of the necessity to change. The “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” discussions allowed the campus community to better understand these reasons for change. Despite the many state budget cuts that were impacting the university, academic departments and units had remained focused on their work: instruction, research, and community engagement. Budget cuts were viewed as “central administration” mandates that, in essence, impeded their ability to perform day-to-day responsibilities. At the same time, central administration had been focused on strategies to shield the campus from the more severe potential impacts of budget cuts, such as layoffs, and a widespread understanding of the need for change did not exist.

Despite past efforts to make the university’s budget process open and transparent, most of the campus was not engaged in the nuances of the process. In fact, budget requests for new funding and new programs continued unabated in spite of widespread cuts. For these reasons, campus discussions that focused specifically on the future of the university were critical to assisting the campus community in understanding that the University of Louisville could not always continue to operate as it had in the past.

The campus discussions also helped campus units/departments understand that, while the development of alternative revenue sources had helped the university progress during the period of budget cuts, many “entrepreneurial” opportunities for the future still existed at the unit/departmental level. In fact, the discussions of the “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” helped departments understand that other departments were already beginning to change (both in business practice and the delivery of instruction) and that an assessment by all units was required.

The management of change requires an understanding of the reasons for change and the “pace” of change. An understanding of that was important due to the decentralized history of the University of Louisville; change needed to occur on an evolutionary basis, rather than on a revolutionary one. The “pace” of change will

be different for each recommendation, and this “pace” in the academy is a difficult issue that varies from campus to campus. For example, the work of Michael Crow at Arizona State University has progressed rapidly. Other evidence shows that such efforts at Michigan to bring about administrative changes perhaps moved too rapidly and without sufficient campus input.

**2. Refining Campus Priorities.** One can easily say that a campus community should come together and “prioritize” activities that drive resource allocation decisions. However, the reality is that each academic unit on campus plays a critical role in the overall academic teaching and research agenda of the university. Clearly, no department or unit wants to be told, “You’re not as important as some other unit.”

The “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” focused on priorities from a different perspective — one that encouraged an identification of the broad-based areas of greatest community/societal need where the university could make a difference, and how each campus unit fit into the achievement of these broader community issues such as economic development, health care, etc. Thus, a “tent was pitched” focusing on key strategic areas of community importance; a tent that was broad in scope so as to allow each unit on campus to identify how it could effectively contribute to excellence in meeting a broad-based policy initiative. This process required each unit to thoughtfully self-evaluate from the context of the larger university and to put its specific expertise into a broader societal perspective. Difficult resource allocation decisions are still required, but can now be presented less in the context of pitting department against department or college against college and more in the context of discovering what is required to achieve a broader policy agenda.

**3. A “Student-Centered” University.** As already noted, often it is difficult for higher education as an institution to think of education itself as a “product” that is to be delivered to a “consumer.” (As noted earlier, there exists differentiated demands, as consumers of higher education are traditional-aged students, returning, transfer students, etc.) Yet, as previously noted, many proprietary institutions have been successful in determining market niches and providing educational opportunities within those niche areas. The key for a successful “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” is the understanding that the “tastes and preferences” of students, as consumers, has and does change, and that direct student input into campus decision making is consistent with the shared governance role of faculty and staff.



Campus discussions focused on the “tastes and preferences” of students often result in a different set of decision variables than currently exist. For example, a decision calculus that addresses student demand for alternative academic delivery models will be more explicitly determined than the historical incremental decision-making approach that is most often used on many campuses.

**4. Climbing “Higher in the Tree.”** As previously noted, the University of Louisville has focused on cost/expense management for several years. However, most of the cost management changes that were implemented did not require significant sacrifice of constituents on the campus. For example, few would oppose retrofitting buildings to save energy costs: washing windows every other year rather than every year, etc. The “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” campus discussions allowed the campus community to understand that the “low hanging fruit” had already been “picked” and that changes in business processes would become more difficult and impose “costs” on one or more constituency groups.

As noted, the University of Louisville has historically had a decentralized financial management process. This model was supported by the campus on the basis that each unit is different and has different needs; thus, each unit and department is best served by a decentralized model. Still, while respecting the decentralized history of the University of Louisville, it became apparent that greater centralization of administrative functions, including financial functions of the university, needed to be undertaken to achieve, not only cost efficiencies, but to build a stronger system of internal controls.

**5. Educating/Involving the Board.** The “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” process at the University of Louisville proved to be a significant opportunity for the Board of Trustees to engage in a positive and significant way in the policy direction of the university. As previously noted, the University of Louisville was given a statutory mandate in the “Reform.” The Board that existed at the time of the “Reform” and immediately thereafter was significantly engaged in discussions as to how the university could achieve its mandate, and it was the Board of Trustees that drove the development of the university’s first strategic plan – the *Challenge for Excellence* and the subsequent *2020 Plan*.

Over time, the terms ended of the original Trustees, who understood the intent of the “Reform” and were part of the development/approval of the strategic plans and goal setting process, and they were replaced by Trustees who did not have this background or history. The newer

Board members wanted to be engaged in campus governance/policy in a positive way but felt that they were “caretakers,” having inherited a process that they had not been part of developing. Without discarding the framework that had been developed over time to achieve the university’s statutory mandate, the “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” process enabled the Board of Trustees to be engaged in policy discussions around the strategic future of the university and allowed buy-in that was otherwise difficult for the Board to achieve.

## Conclusion

The implementation of the recommendations that emerged from the “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” discussions at the University of Louisville continues today. Yet, the campus dialogue that has taken place has played a critical role in:

- a. Allowing the entire campus community to understand the changing dynamics of higher education;
- b. Engaging in open, frank dialogue about the future of the university, while still reflecting the statutory mandate given to the university; and
- c. Allowing the university to continue to move forward on its upward trajectory without completely discarding the strategic plans, goals, strategies, tactics, and metrics of performance that had become critical to the university’s success.

As noted, one of the great strengths of the American higher education system is its diversity – our colleges and universities in the United States are very heterogeneous – and many of the national and state policy discussions are about quality; accreditation; rating of colleges and universities; the setting of tuition; etc., often fail to appreciate the diversity of our higher education system.

The University of Louisville has only in recent years been statutorily mandated to become a “premier research university” with a focus on translational research that enhances the economic opportunity and quality of life for the people of our community and region. While the university benefited significantly from the traditional higher education planning model, the campus discussions regarding the “University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” have been a vital vehicle for the university to address difficult and challenging issues while continuing to move forward with the achievement of its statutory mandate.

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